

Applicants : Neil G. Cousins et al.
Appln. No. : 10/781,257
Page : 2

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-26 (canceled)

Claim 27 (previously presented): A combination film stretcher and dispenser, comprising:

a support structure;

a film support connected to the support structure for supporting a roll of film;

first and second stretch rollers rotatably connected to the support structure, the first and second stretch rollers being spaced apart to permit a sheet of film to wrap around the stretch rollers, and pass therebetween;

at least one guide roller spaced apart from the first and second stretch rollers and defining therewith a curvilinear film path including arcuate portions defined by outer surfaces of the first and second stretch rollers and the guide roller;

a single motor operably connected to the first and second stretch rollers and rotating the first and second stretch rollers to stretch film extending between and wrapping around the first and second stretch rollers;

first and second guides positioned adjacent ends of the first and second stretch rollers, respectively;

a third guide connected to the support structure and positioned adjacent an end of the guide roller;

a film threading device including an elongated flexible member engaging the first, second and third guides and forming a loop, at least a portion of the loop having a shape that is substantially similar to a shape of the curvilinear film path, the film threading device including a retainer connected to the elongated flexible member, the retainer configured to hold an end portion of a sheet of film and pull the film along the curvilinear film path as the elongated flexible member is moved;

Applicants : Neil G. Cousins et al.
Appln. No. : 10/781,257
Page : 3

a drive member engaging the elongated flexible member and moving the elongated flexible member upon movement of the drive member;

a disengagable drive device operably interconnecting the drive member and the single motor;

the disengagable drive device having an engaged configuration wherein the single motor simultaneously moves the drive member, elongated flexible member and retainer, and the first and second stretch rollers, the single motor providing substantially the sole source of power moving the first and second stretch rollers and the drive member, elongated flexible member and the retainer when the disengagable drive device is in the engaged configuration and thereby threads film through the combination film stretcher and dispenser; and

the disengagable drive device having a disengaged configuration wherein the disengagable drive device operably disconnects the drive member from the single motor, such that the single motor moves the first and second stretch rollers and stretches film without moving the drive member and elongated flexible member.

Claim 28 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 27, wherein:

the first, second and third guides comprise sprockets; and

the elongated flexible member comprises a chain.

Claim 29 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 28, wherein:

the retainer comprises a hook-like member.

Claim 30 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 27, wherein:

the single motor has a rotatable output member that is connected to the second stretch roller by a drive member such that rotation of the output member rotates the second stretch roller;

gears interconnecting the first and second stretch rollers and rotating the first stretch roller upon rotation of the second stretch roller.

Applicants : Neil G. Cousins et al.
Appln. No. : 10/781,257
Page : 4

Claim 31 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 30, wherein:
the gears rotate the first and second stretch rollers at different rotational rates.

Claim 32 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 27, wherein:
the second guide comprises a sprocket engaging the elongated flexible member;
the disengagable drive device comprises a clutch selectively interconnecting the sprocket and the second stretch roller such that the sprocket rotates upon rotation of the second stretch roller when the clutch is in the engaged configuration and moves the elongated flexible member, the clutch disconnecting the sprocket from the second stretch roller when the clutch is in the disengaged configuration.

Claim 33 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 32, including:
a sensor configured to measure the travel of the elongated flexible member; and
a controller operably coupled to the sensor and to the clutch, the controller configured to change the clutch from the engaged configuration to the disengaged configuration after a predetermined amount of travel of the elongated flexible member.

Claim 34 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 27, including:
a pair of take-off rollers defining parallel axes and first and second ends, wherein the take-off rollers rotatably mounted to the support structure;
a fourth guide mounted to the support structure adjacent the first ends of the take-off rollers and positioning a portion of the elongated flexible member between the axes of the take-off rollers.

Claim 35 (new): The combination film stretcher and dispenser of claim 27, wherein:
the first, second and third guides comprise first, second, and third sprockets, respectively and the elongated flexible member comprises a chain, and including:

Applicants : Neil G. Cousins et al.
Appln. No. : 10/781,257
Page : 5

a tensioning sprocket engaging the chain, the tensioning sprocket being rotatably and slidably mounted to the support structure; and

a resilient member biasing the tensioning sprocket into engagement with the chain.

Claim 36 (new): A film stretching and dispensing apparatus, comprising:

a support structure;

a film support connected to the support structure, the film support configured to support a roll of film;

first and second stretch rollers rotatably connected to the support structure and defining first and second axes, respectively;

a film guide member connected to the support structure and being spaced apart from the first and second stretch rollers;

the first and second stretch rollers and the film guide member together defining at least a portion of a curvilinear film path extending from the film guide member around at least a portion of the first and second stretch rollers, and between the axes of the first and second stretch rollers;

a guide assembly connected to the support structure;

an elongated flexible member movably supported by the guide assembly and forming a loop, at least a portion of the elongated flexible member having a shape that is substantially similar to a shape of the curvilinear film path;

a single motor having a rotating output member;

a drive assembly coupling the rotating output member to the first and second stretch rollers and rotating the first and second stretch rollers upon rotation of the rotating output member;

a drive member engaging the elongated flexible member and moving the elongated flexible member upon movement of the drive member;

a disengagable coupling selectively connecting and disconnecting the drive member and the rotating output member;

Applicants : Neil G. Cousins et al.
Appln. No. : 10/781,257
Page : 6

the disengagable coupling causing the drive member to move upon rotation of the rotating output member when the disengagable coupling connects the rotating output member and the drive member; and wherein:

the rotating output member rotates without moving the drive member when the disengagable coupling disconnects the rotating output member and the drive member.

Claim 37 (new): The film stretching and dispensing apparatus of claim 36, wherein:
the guide assembly includes at least first, second, and third rotatable members, each of which engages the elongated flexible member.

Claim 38 (new): The film stretching and dispensing apparatus of claim 37, wherein:
the first, second, and third rotatable members comprise sprockets;
the elongated flexible member comprises a chain.

Claim 39 (new): The film stretching and dispensing apparatus of claim 36, including:
a hook-like retaining member connected to the elongated flexible member.

Claim 40 (new): The film stretching and dispensing apparatus of claim 36, wherein:
the drive assembly includes a first gear mounted to the first stretch roller, a second gear connected to the second stretch roller and meshingly engaging the first gear.

Claim 41 (new): The film stretching and dispensing apparatus of claim 40, wherein:
the drive member comprises a rotatable member engaging the elongated flexible member and moving the elongated flexible member upon rotation of the rotatable member;
the disengagable coupling comprising a clutch selectively connecting and disconnecting the rotatable member from the rotating output member.

Applicants : Neil G. Cousins et al.
Appln. No. : 10/781,257
Page : 7

Claim 42 (new): The film stretching and dispensing apparatus of claim 41, wherein:
the rotatable member comprises a sprocket that is interconnected to the second stretch roller by the clutch.